

Application No. 09/782,754

STATUS OF THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A communications system, comprising:
an advice provider which broadcasts information over a communications
5 medium to a plurality of advice consumers, irrespective of actual relevance of said
information to said plurality of advice consumers;
an advice consumer of said plurality of advice consumers for gathering said
broadcast information from said communications medium; and
a reader associated with said advice consumer for determining relevance of
10 said gathered broadcast information to said advice consumer;
wherein said advice consumer is advised of said gathered broadcast
information only if said gathered broadcast information meets certain predetermined
relevance criteria.
- 15 2. (Original) The system of Claim 1, wherein said reader further comprises:
means for providing relevant information to said advice consumer without
revealing any aspect of said advice consumer's identity to said advice provider.
3. (Original) The system of Claim 1, wherein relevance of said information to said
20 advice consumer is based upon any of the properties of an advice consumer's
computer, said computer's contents or state, or the properties of a local environment
associated with said computer.
4. (Original) The system of Claim 2, wherein said advice consumer maintains
25 anonymity, privacy, and security by not revealing to said advice provider either that
said advice consumer is interested in information from said advice provider, that said
advice consumer has received any particular message, or that said information is
relevant to said advice consumer.
- 30 5. (Original) The system of Claim 1, wherein said information being broadcast may
consist of any of humanly-interpretable content, data, or software tools.

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6. (Original) The system of Claim 1, wherein said advice provider specifies an audience for whom said information is potentially relevant by referring to properties of an advice consumer which are used to determine the relevance of said information to said advice consumer.

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7. (Currently Amended) A communications method, comprising the steps of:
preparing a message at an advice provider location;
broadcasting said message to potential advice consumers anonymously using a network, wherein said message is broadcast to advice consumers to whom it is
10 potentially relevant without requiring that said advice consumers divulge their identity or attributes or message-related relevance information to said advice provider;
receiving said broadcast message at said potential advice consumers;
processing storing said received broadcast message at an advice consumer
location; and

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determining at said advice consumer location whether said stored received broadcast message is relevant to said advice consumer;
~~wherein said message is broadcast to advice consumers to whom it is potentially relevant without requiring that said advice consumers divulge their identity or attributes or message-related relevance information to said advice provider.~~

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8. (Currently Amended) In a system including computational devices connected by a communications network, a communications apparatus for ~~linking an information provider to information consumer,~~ comprising:

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specific units of advice to be shared;
digital documents conveying said advice;
an advice provider for broadcasting said advice in the form of advisories to a plurality of advice consumers;
an advice consumer of said plurality of advice consumers for receiving said advisories;

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wherein said advisories are anonymously broadcast over said communications network from said advice provider to and are received by said advice consumer, wherein said advisories are potentially relevant to said advice consumer, and wherein said advice consumer is not required to divulge to said

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advice provider any of their identity, attributes and message-related relevance information; and

a communications protocol for narrowly-focused targeting of said received advisories to said advice consumer by automatically matching said received advisories at said advice consumer ~~with said plurality of advice consumers~~ for whom said received advisories are potentially relevant.

9. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 8, further comprising:

an advice reader associated with an advice consumer computer for performing relevance determination.

10. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 9, wherein relevance determination is automatically performed based on a combination of conditions, including any of hardware attributes, configuration attributes, database attributes, environmental attributes, computed attributes, remote attributes, timeliness, personal attributes, randomization, and advice attributes.

11. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 9, wherein said advice reader operates automatically to determine relevance.

12. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 9, said advice reader comprising:

a gatherer for gathering advisories to which said advice consumer subscribes;

a subscription manager for entering subscriptions to advisories based on information in at least one advice consumer site definition file;

an unwrapper for parsing said advisories;

a module for determining the relevance of said advisories, said determination being made either continuously, at scheduled intervals, or under user manual control;

a user interface that receives relevant advisories; and

a display and management system that displays relevant advisories for inspection by said advice consumer.

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13. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 8, wherein any information that is actually on an advice consumer computer or reachable from said advice consumer computer may be used to determine relevance.

5 14. (Original) The apparatus of Claim 8, wherein said advisories comprise:

digital documents which contain an explanatory component describing in terms said advice consumer can easily understand the reason that said advisory is relevant and the purpose and effects of the action which is being recommended to said advice consumer.

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15. (Withdrawn) A communications apparatus, comprising:
an advisory comprising:

a relevance clause comprising an assertion about the state of an advice consumer computer, its contents, or environment which can be automatically evaluated by comparing said assertion with said advice consumer computer's actual state;

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a message associated with said relevance clause whose suitability for the consumer is determined at least partially by the evaluation of said relevance clause;

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a gatherer for assuring that relevance clauses flow into said advice consumer computer from various locations;

a watcher for evaluating relevance clauses by comparing them with an actual state of an advice consumer environment, and by inspecting properties of said advice consumer computer and its environment and checking if these point towards or away from relevance; and

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a notifier for displaying messages to an advice consumer under at least partial guidance of an evaluated relevance clause.

16. (Withdrawn) The apparatus of Claim 15, said advisory further comprising any of:

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a wrapper for packaging information in said advisory for transport and subsequent decoding;

a from line fort identifying an advice author;

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- a subject line for identifying the concern of said advisory;
- a relevance clause for specifying conditions under which the said is relevant;
- a message body for providing explanatory material explaining to said advice consumer what condition is relevant, why said advice consumer is concerned, and
- 5 what action is recommended; and
- an action button for providing said advice consumer with the ability to invoke an automatic execution of a recommended action.